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EDITORIAL NOTES.

THE problems of secondary education seem to be uppermost in the minds of those who are interested in a nation's educational, industrial, and commercial progress. Not many months since we noticed the movement in Germany, under the patronage and indeed the inspiration of the Emperor, to make the secondary schools conform more nearly to the needs of the national life with its changed and ever-changing ideals. The bill before the British Parliament at the present time is distinguished from its predecessors by the provision for a more accurate definition of secondary education, and for its better articulation with elementary education. The Council of the Teachers' Guild of England is now making an investigation into the right order and relation of subject-matter in secondary schools, and expects to make this the great subject for discussion at the meeting of the Education Section in connection with the British Association next autumn.

But specially interesting to us is the movement in France. The Chamber has just concluded a most interesting debate, conducted on a very high plane, concerning a bill providing for the reformation of certain phases of secondary education in that country. The Minister of Public Instruction and the Commission de l'Enseignement, after thorough investigation and mature consideration, submitted a plan by which the secondary schools might be made more direct and positive contributors to national progress. The movement toward free secondary education is seen in France in the proposal to lower the fees in connection with the *lycées* and to increase the number of *bourses*. As M. Ribot said in the course of the debate—"As to free secondary education, the ideal of a well organized society is not to give the same instruction to all, but to open a way to the highest studies for the brighter minds even in the poorest classes of students." The total number of hours given to class work and study is to be reduced to nine for pupils under sixteen years of age, to seven for those under twelve, and a lesson instead of lasting through a wearisome two hours is to be confined to one hour. These provisions seem to us to be rational and in keeping with modern educational thought. But the greatest of changes occur in the heart of the school—the plan of studies. As an indication of the reason for the changes and of the general tendency in higher education in France, an extract from the speech of M. Leygues may be cited :

The struggle among nations for existence is too severe ; the competition that we have to meet from our rivals is too keen to permit the university to stand aloof. In a country like France, where the professional population represents 48 per cent. of the whole, where the commercial capital engaged in agriculture and industry exceeds two

hundred millions of francs, the university cannot content itself with preparing the young men entrusted to it for liberal careers alone; it must also prepare for active life, for action. We have already brought our universities into contact with the general life; they have come down from the Olympian regions in which they had too long moved. They lend their aid to industry, commerce, and agriculture. Who can complain? We have established a school of tanning at the University of Lyons, a school of brewing at Nancy, laboratories for chemistry as applied to dyeing, etc. The university has not lost prestige owing to these steps. It still cultivates pure science, but it cultivates practical science also, and it extends its field instead of diminishing it. It becomes a force more active and more rich in results.

In accordance with such an ideal we find the following changes made in the plan of study. Secondary education is co-ordinated with primary in such a way that it forms a sequel to a course of primary instruction having a normal duration of four years; its own duration is seven years divided into two parts, one of four years and one of three. In the first division the pupils have a choice between two sections. In section A, Latin is obligatory from the first year, and Greek is optional from the fourth year; in section B, there is neither Latin nor Greek; but emphasis is placed on French, science, drawing, etc. The course of study in this division is so organized as to form a complete whole, and is not used as a mere preparation for the next division. There will be many pupils whose circumstances will not allow them more than eight years of schooling, and the country owes it to these that they be as well equipped as possible for the life in the great outside world. In the second division there are four groups of principal courses from which the pupil may make his choice: (a) Latin and Greek; (b) Latin with a more widely developed study of languages; (c) Latin with a more thorough study of science; (d) languages and science without any Latin course.

There will be only one *baccalauréat* of secondary education and based on examination on one of the above-mentioned sections of the second division. All diplomas of *bachelier* confer the same rights. Should students desire not to proceed to the *baccalauréat*, but study applied science, they may after passing the examinations at the end of the first division attend for two years certain schools of applied science which the government proposes to develop or found in various parts of the country.

The striking features of this plan are the possibility of a student obtaining the *baccalauréat*, and so entering the universities and the professions without any knowledge of Latin; shortening of the course and the articulation with primary education; the reservation of Greek for the élite. Think of France allowing a youth to go through the *lycée* without Latin or Greek, and to go to the university to learn tanning or brewing!

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